

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 11846 110737Z

17-20

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-25 SS-15 SSO-00 L-03 SR-02 ORM-03

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7294

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OGEN, IN, UR, US

SUBJ: FURTHER PRESS PLAY ON SOVIET DEFECTOR PAKHOMOV

1. MOST OCTOBER 11 DELHI PAPERS CARRIED ARTICLES ON THE SOVIET TOURIST-DEFECTOR. THE HEADLINES WERE SOMEWHAT CONTRADICTORY: "RUSSIAN MAY BE IN US EMBASSY", "US ASYLUM FOR SOVIET TOURIST UNLIKELY", "DISAPPEARANCE OF RUSSIAN STILL A MYSTERY".

2. THE "STATESMAN" SAID THAT ACCORDING TO RELIABLE SOURCES THE RUSSIAN TOURIST IS IN THE US EMBASSY. ACCORDING TO INVESTIGATING AUTHORITIES, PAKHOMOV ASKED THE DRIVER OF A CAR AND THEN A TAXI TO TAKE HIM TO THE US EMBASSY; THE TAXI EVENTUALLY DROPPED HIM AT THE EMBASSY GATES WHERE HE JUMPED INTO A WAITING CD CAR WHICH DROVE HIM INSIDE; THE GATES WERE IMMEDIATELY CLOSED. US EMBASSY OFFICIALS REFUSED TO COMMENT ON THE AUTHORITIES' FINDINGS.

3. THE "HINDUSTAN TIMES" SAID INFORMED CIRCLES THOUGHT THE POSSIBILITY PAKHOMOV IS SEEKING ASYLUM IN THE US EMBASSY IS EXTREMELY REMOTE; THE US WOULD NOT WANT FRICTION IN ITS RELATIONS WITH INDIA OR THE SOVIET UNION; A US

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EMBASSY SPOKESMAN SAID NO RUSSIAN HAD TAKEN ASYLUM IN THE

EMBASSY. ACCORDING TO "MOTHERLAND", THE US EMBASSY STRONGLY DENIED PAKHOMOV HAD GAINED ENTRY INTO THE EMBASSY AND HAD BEEN GRANTED POLITICAL ASYLUM.

4. THE "TIMES OF INDIA" SPECULATED THAT PAKHOMOV WAS A PRIZE AGENT WHO PULLED OFF AN INGENIOUS, CLOCK-WORK ESCAPE AFTER SOUNDING OUT A FRIENDLY COUNTRY. ANOTHER REPORT SAID BORDER POSTS WERE BEING WATCHED AND HOTELS CHECKED. MOST PAPERS MENTIONED THAT ACCORDING TO THE SOVIET EMBASSY PAKHOMOV WAS A BIT MENTALLY DISTURBED.
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